

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, June 10, 2002**

Present: June Bailey, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Janet Miller, M.S. Mitchell, and Trix Niernberger

Absent: Joe Todd

Also Present: Mary Rogers, Rickie Coleman and Norris McGilbray – Fairmount Neighborhood Association; Kathy Dittmer – Riverside Citizens Association (RCA); Tonia Fairbanks – Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department; and Doug Kupper, Walt Bratton, and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 13, 2002, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Fairmount Building Utilization Proposal by the Fairmount Neighborhood Association (FNA).**

Director Kupper referred board members to the neighborhood association's long-range plan for Fairmount Park included with the agenda. He introduced Mary Rogers, Rickie Coleman, and Norris McGilbray from the Fairmount Neighborhood Association.

Mary Rogers gave a brief background and history of Fairmount Park beginning with the 1940's through the present day. She said the FNA felt that the park was essential to their plans for neighborhood revitalization. She indicated that there have been numerous incidents of crime and gang activity in and around the park in the past and that development of the "Fairmount Community Center" was vital to curbing those kinds of activities. She commented that the summer activities program at the park was created in 1998 with the approval and cooperation of the Park Department. She said the ultimate goal of the FNA was to expand the program and offer activities at the community center year round, after school and on weekends for children, teens and adults of all ages. She referred board members to the list of proposed activities which included the following: summer tennis and other related sports (she mentioned that the Trojans football team, part of the Park Department's Junior Football Program practiced at the park); crafts for children and adolescents, coffee/games hour for adults and seniors; establishment of a walking group; story time and story telling sessions for children; tennis for adults; harmonica and French classes; and various other lectures and workshops sponsored by outside agencies. She commented that because the median income of neighborhood was so low, the FNA was recruiting volunteers and conducting fund raising activities in an effort to make all activities free. She also requested that building rental fees be waived for area residents due to their poor economic status.

Norris McGilbray and Rickie Coleman related various stories about gang activities, drive-by shootings and drug deals that were a constant problem at the park. They added that last year during reconstruction of the shelter building gang activity increased. They indicated that if area residents used the park more frequently for sports and other recreational programs and activities, it would discourage gangs and other illegal activities in the area. They also said that by making Fairmount Park a focal point for positive activities, it would increase a sense of community throughout the

neighborhood. Rickie Coleman stressed if activities and rentals were not free of charge, the neighbors surrounding the park (who ranged from retirees to college students, to young families with children) would not be able to participate.

Members of the FNA concluded their presentation by asking the Park Board to support their request to become resident-managers for the newly created community center. They indicated their willingness to enter into an agreement and stated that as managers they would schedule activities; open and close the building and assist with clean up after events, much as they had been doing since 1998 prior to the building renovation.

Board members raised several questions concerning the proposal including building access and key security; types of activities that would be charged rental fees (private vs. neighborhood sponsored events) and who would make those decisions; possible discrimination issues; building scheduling; maintenance costs and building rental income; policy decision on the proposal as it related to how other shelter buildings were operated; public/private partnerships and the need for a written agreement of some type.

Responding to a question, Director Kupper indicated that no other shelter building was operated in the manner being proposed by the FNA; that the proposal would be breaking new ground. He added that there were also a number of liability issues that needed to be addressed. Dey suggested formation of a task force consisting of City departments and public/private organizations to study long-range goals, accountability, liability and other issues. There was discussion concerning the possibility of hiring a FNA member as a part-time building attendant to open and close the shelter.

Miller commented that she liked the concept and supported the idea of partnering with the FNA to bring neighborhood-sponsored activities to the building that would benefit the whole community. She added that it would take an organized/coordinated effort with park staff but suggested that the FNA be given a key to the facility as a short-term solution until an agreement could be worked out.

President Mitchell asked Kathy Dittmer, President, Riverside Citizens Association (RCA), to review partnership activities that the RCA and Park Department have conducted at Central Riverside Park. Dittmer commented that after several shootings in Central Riverside Park, the RCA and Park Use Task Force, working in conjunction with the Community Police, former Council Member Joan Cole, Wichita Independent Neighborhoods, private and corporate sponsors, and the Park Department developed a number of ideas for events in Central Riverside that would be community inclusive. She commented that the most popular ideas were the East High/WSU jazz concert, Easter concert and gospel concerts on Sunday evenings. She also mentioned the possibility of obtaining grant money through the District Advisory Board – Neighborhood Services. Dey suggested the FNA attend a District I Coalition meeting to present their plan and possibly expand their support base. It was also suggested that they give a presentation to the District I Advisory Board. Miller requested that staff provide information on the direct cost to use the facility.

On motion by Dey, second by Niernberger, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to direct staff to draft a formal an agreement with the FNA.

2. **Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center Indoor Facility.** Director Kupper briefly reviewed the item and referred board members to pictures of the proposed facility from various angles in and around South Riverside Park. There was brief discussion concerning developing the indoor/outdoor center into a private venture; alternative sites in the core area, not necessarily south riverside; public/private partnerships; and Capital Improvement Funding. Mitchell asked who would make the decision regarding facility location? Director Kupper responded that the City, City Manager and private fundraisers would probably decide on facility location.
3. **Riverbank Maintenance.** There was general discussion concerning erosion of the riverbank in several areas; the condition of two large trees at the end of Forest Avenue; how boating and water skiing affect the riverbank; removal of the proposed riverbank reconstruction work from the Riverside Park System Master Plan; renovation of the launch areas; and how properly selected tree species could help slow down the erosion process.
4. **Update on Mountain Bike Trail at Pawnee Prairie Park.** Director Kupper reported that the matter was discussed and unanimously endorsed by the District V Advisory Board at their April meeting. However, after several people contacted Councilman Bob Martz, the DAB reconsidered its decision at the June 3 meeting, which he attended, where approximately 85 individuals spoke regarding the proposed bike trail plan. The DAB appointed a committee consisting of two equestrians, two bicyclists, two neighborhood residents and two DAB members to study and report on the proposed plan and/or recommend alternatives.
5. **Capital Improvement Program.**
 - Riverside Park – Director Kupper reported that approximately 75% of the design work and bid documents were complete on the project.
 - Recreation Center Improvements – Director Kupper mentioned that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds would be used to replace the gymnasium floors at both Atwater and McAdams Recreation Centers. There was discussion concerning the use of different materials and costs associated with each. In addition, he mentioned replacement of the weight equipment at Atwater, and work on the parking lots and lights at McAdams, Lynette Woodard, and Planeview Parks. He also mentioned systematic replacement of basketball backboards and tables and chairs at several facilities.
 - Playgrounds – Director Kupper reported that the final phase (Group 5) of the playground equipment replacement project had been bid to spend the last of the original \$1 million allocation. He said a revised Request For Proposal (RFP) was being prepared for the next \$1 million. He said the new RFP asked vendors to provide plans for playground construction/renovation based on specific dollar amounts.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary